

MilAtari Limited Edition

Vol. IX, No. 11
November 1990

This Month:

General Meeting

Sat., Nov. 24th, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran
Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

Exec. Board Meeting

Sun., Nov. 25th, 7:30 pm
Shakey's
9638 W. National Ave.

Next Month:

General Meeting

Sat., Dec. 15th, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran
Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

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Michelle Gross

From the President

LCACE AtariFest to be held in November

Hopefully this month's issue will reach you in time to make last minute plans to attend the LCACE AtariFest being held Sunday, November 11, down in Gurnee Illinois. The show starts at 10 AM and will close down at 4:00 PM. There will be two floors of vendors, user groups and swap tables. What a great way to get some Christmas shopping done!

Expect to meet some of the faces behind your favorite products and services as well, as the exhibitor list now includes Code-Head Software, Compuserve, GENie, D.A. Brumleve, ICD, and more!

Tickets will be \$3.00 at the door, and include the chance for some great door prizes. Anyone looking for more information, feel free to call me, Armin, or you can contact the Python BBS, where a message base has been established for the show. 708-680-5105.

Be sure to note that our meeting will be held the fourth Saturday this month, which will be the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Tom Girsch has promised to give a SIG on DataManager at our November meeting, and other demos are in the works. If you haven't already picked up the ST PD disk 284 which includes the Midimaze editor program, be sure and do so. We are counting on getting some entries to the contest Dennis is running so we have new mazes for the old pros at GEN CON.

On the national front, I understand Elie Kenan, the new head of Atari USA, has packed up his bags and gone back to France. I am not sure of the details, and until I have them from a direct and reliable source, will not speculate on the events leading up to his return to France. However, in any case, it is not good news to the Atari community who has waited for Atari to make a move into the American market. For up to date information (but not necessarily gospel truth) on this and other Atari news, check out the online magazines Znet and ST Report, which can be found on our BBS and also the national networks.

I am working on the software review form that I had mentioned recently, and hope to have it available by the November meeting. If you recall, it is a list of questions about a piece of software that can be used by those members who are not inclined to write an review. On the basis of the answers given, a review will be written by another member (credited to both the author and the person who filled out the form). Please remember, if you won software at the club picnic, it is your responsibility to either write a review or fill out a review form! Let's maintain our rapport with the software companies who so generously donated prizes to our club!

Finally, I hope you all have found our BBS to be up and running again after one of our hard drives took a dive... If you are experiencing any problems getting online, or getting around, give me a call, or Rich and we'll take care of ya!

MilAtari Ltd.

The Milwaukee Area
Atari Users Group
Post Office Box 14038
West Allis, WI 53214

Membership in MilAtari Ltd. is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 for individuals, \$25.00 per family and includes a one year subscription to this newsletter and access to club libraries. Membership applications may be obtained at the monthly meeting or by writing to the club Secretary at the above address.

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Piracy of legally copyrighted software, hardware or documentation is hereby recognized as illegal and a detriment to the goals of MilAtari Ltd., and shall not be sanctioned by MilAtari Ltd.

Newsletter Articles Needed!

Here we go again.... the club is once again in need of newsletter articles. We attempt to provide the highest quality possible in our newsletter, but we can't continue to do so without your help!

If you are the type of person who thinks "I can't write an article", this is directed at YOU! You don't have to be an accomplished writer to submit an article to the newsletter. Have you purchased a new piece of software recently? Or figured out a new way to use an existing piece? A comment about the state of the computer industry? Let the rest of the club membership in on it and write an article. All you need is your word processor!

If you have any questions, just give me a call.... but please, give me some help! - The Editor

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Doug Raeburn

The Game of Harmony

Mfg: Accolade**List Price:** \$40.00 (approx.)**Type:** ST action/strategy game**Rating:** Try it!

For longer than I'd care to remember, I've been a fairly avid gamer. I've gone through an Atari 2600, a ColecoVision, an ST and now an IBM clone. One of the problems with being an avid gamer is that you can become a jaded gamer. I go into software stores with hundreds of titles, and most of them look like retreads of the same games that have been out forever (or so it seems). Just how many text adventures can I play? Graphics adventures? Flight/submarine/automobile etc., etc., etc. simulators? Arcade shoot-em-ups? Double Dragon Clones? Golf simulations? And the list goes on.

I guess it must be difficult for game manufacturers to come up with original ideas. When I encounter a game based on one, I usually snap it up. Recently, I stumbled across HARMONY, and I must admit that I haven't seen anything quite so original since SIM CITY.

In fact, HARMONY is so original that it is difficult to describe. Basically, you are faced with screens full of randomly placed pairs of colored spheres, along with a variety of walls and other obstacles. The basic premise of the game is to clear the spheres from the screen. To do this, you have a sort of cue ball called the seeker. You can aim the seeker and propel it into the other spheres, nudging or slamming these other spheres into each other. When you propel a sphere of one color into another of the same color, "synergy" occurs, and the spheres disappear. After you clear one screen, another appears to challenge you. The game seems to be a art deco combination of pool, marbles and bocci ball.

Sound simple? Well, of course, they're not going to let you off that easy. First, as I stated before, you have a variety of walls and other obstacles with which to deal. Also, the spheres don't bounce off the edge of the screen like a pool table - they go off one edge and come back on the opposite edge. The on-screen movement is fluid, seeming to perfectly emulate the laws of nature.

**...I must admit that I
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SIM CITY.**

Periodically, the spheres are attached to each other, or even to the seeker, with an elastic band. When you push connected spheres together, you must do so with a fair amount of force, or the band will make the target sphere move away from you. When you move a connected sphere away from its "mate", the mate follows you, and often gets in your way. Then, if you push a connected sphere off the edge of the screen, it snaps back quickly from the other end.

When playing the regular game, there are other factors which make life interesting. First, there is a time limit. When you reach each screen, the spheres are pulsing slowly. If you take too long to clear them, they begin pulsing faster, until they finally explode into a blizzard of little spheres, which sap your energy. Second, if a sphere hits another sphere of a different color, a third little sphere (called a pod) appears. If you don't consume the pod right away, it eventually grows into a big sphere, becoming another item to clear in your limited time frame.

There is an energy line on the top of the screen. When you consume a pod, you gain more energy. When spheres explode, you can watch your energy level plummet. When you run out of energy, you lose a life.

Occasionally, a pod will appear randomly on the screen for a few seconds. If you consume the pod, you then can eliminate the big spheres on the screen just by touching them, just for the duration of that screen.

Every few screens, you are treated to a bonus screen. This typically is a number of colored pods which you consume to gain extra points. The difficulty is that these pods are blocked by other colored spheres, as well as walls, and if you touch any of the "non-bonus" spheres, the round is over (as well as when the timer runs out). Other bonus screens have little spheres appearing randomly one at a time, and you must consume them as quickly as possible.

You are given a choice of 2 joystick control modes or a keyboard mode. In addition, you can play with 2 players in a cooperative setting.

Frankly, game play becomes pretty intense on the upper levels. The combination of the number of spheres to eliminate and the complexity of the obstacles make it a real challenge. The secret is that, unlike most action games, deliberate, well-considered moves are more suitable than rapid, haphazard movement. If you stop to consider just the right moves, it can earn more points than frantic game play. If you can clear a screen without making any pods (by causing unlike color spheres to collide), you are rewarded with 1500 bonus points.

Fortunately, you can get lots of practice using the Karma mode. In the Karma mode, you go through all of the same screens, but with no time limit, and no extra sphere penalty when unlike spheres collide. I have gone through all 50 screens in Karma mode, and the mazes are extremely

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Chris Alby (the Albster)

HACKERS

Author: Steven Levy

Publisher: Dell Books

List Price: \$4.95

Type: Book, historical epic, narrative

Rating: A "must-have"

Levy tells the story of the Hackers. The first three generations and the first twenty five years.

He starts at Cambridge and MIT. Young souls are drawn into marathon sessions with their own world inside the institute's mainframes. They form a sub society and the Hacker Ethic.

Then to Northern California to delve into the people whose dream it was to bring to computer into every home and spread the Hacker Ethic all over the land. The computer business is born.

Finally to the Sierras and the masters of the gaming

revolution. The leaders who made the great ones and pioneered an industry by taking the machine to new limits.

This four hundred fifty page volume is fully indexed with items like Advanced Research Project Agency and Adventure game. All sources are given in the back. Best of all though is the 65 definitions of men and their machines listing in the front (from PDP-1 and Atari 800 to Lee Felsenstein and John Harris). This book tells all and without burying you in computer terms. I'd call it the manual to all computers. Thanks, Steven.

Price Increase on Copyright Library Rentals

Effective as of the November General Meeting, the price of rentals from the Copyright Library will be increased to \$1.50 (tax included) + \$1.50 refundable deposit. The deposit will be refunded if the software rented is returned by the following general meeting.

The previous price of \$1.00 had been held steady for several years. The Board of Directors felt that this price increase was necessary to help offset increasing costs of operations in all areas of the club.

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Dennis Wilson

ST PD Update

MilAtari Ltd. ST Public Domain Library Disks are available at the meeting at a price of \$3.50 per disk, and through mail order at \$4.00 per disk. The charge for the disks covers the cost of the media and handling, with all proceeds going to support the activities of MilAtari Ltd.

Some of the programs on these disks have been released as shareware and are so documented in the programs themselves. MilAtari Ltd. supports the shareware concept and you are encouraged to make donations to the individual authors should you find their programs useful.

The MilAtari PD Libraries are intended to provide a repository for useful and interesting programs, and each file is tested before inclusion on the disk. We believe that each file is worthy of your consideration. No warranty is expressed nor implied, however, as to their content or usability. Defective disks will be gladly replaced. These disks are made available for sale at the monthly club meeting and may be ordered in advance by posting a message in the Library Lounge on the club BBS. Librarians of other clubs are encouraged to contact our ST Librarian concerning trading of programs in their respective libraries.

DISK 286 - BOOT DISK COMPANION

A selection of accessories and programs for the AUTO folder on your boot disk. The disk is meant to be a companion to the MilAtari Desktop Disk (Disk 100), with additional programs for that disk if you wish to have a double-sided boot disk. This disk is a stand-alone, ready-to-run disk, however.

CARDFILE: Cardfile - An accessory which is a specialized data base which is valuable to anyone who uses a word processor for correspondence or keeps a record of addresses or phone numbers. It helps you organize business cards for the office or addresses for the home. It has a simple but powerful searching capability to allow you to quickly find what you need. It will address individual envelopes, generate phone lists, or even compile address books. This is a demo version of a program available from the author. The demo version limits you to 10 records, while the full program allows you to have 2500 cards.

DFIND: Diamond Find - A powerful general purpose file finding utility. Select the drives you want to search and the files you want to search for. It's that easy. In addition to the

standard wildcard characters, the program fully supports UNIX style wildcard specifications. You may also specify a file to save the output of the search. Accessory and program versions of the utility are included on the disk.

ICATDEM2: Image Cat V2.0 - An accessory which is a demo of the full featured version image cataloger. The demo version limits you to viewing 5 image files, while the full program allows you to print 15 image files per page. Version 2.0 runs without GDOS!

MFORMAT: Multi-Formatter - An accessory disk formatter. It will format both ST and PC disks in a variety of ways, and also speed up disk accessing by as much as 40%. ST disk may be formatted 9 or 10 sectors per track, 80 or 81 tracks per disk.

TEMPLMON: Templemon - A machine language monitor and debugger. It preserves you from any bombs your system usually produces! The program runs on monochrome or color monitors. The overscan (hyperscreen) modification is also supported! The program is an AUTO folder terminate and stay resident (TSR) program. If a system error occurs, e.g. a bus error, no bombs will be seen, but instead the program will tell you in plain English what was the cause of the crash.

NEWTRASH: Tired of looking at that same old trashcan icon? Are you the type that likes having innovative names for your drive icons, but are frustrated at not being able to rename the trashcan? Your prayers have been answered! This folder contains 8 files which are DESKTOP.INF files having different names for the trash can. There is also a template file for naming the trashcan whatever you want.

TLC_ATTR: An accessory for the changing the attributes of files. Hide or unhide them, or change the time-date stamp information.

DISK 287 - UTILITY DISK

ALMANAC: Almanac - a program based on articles in Weather Wise magazine. The program derives various parameters of the sun and moon, including rise and set, on a day by day basis. It also gives dates of equinoxes, solstices and Easter.

CHEETAH: Cheetah V2.0 - A program which is designed as a high speed file copying utility. Hard Drive users will find it the most useful, but it

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does fully support floppy drives. Effective transfer rates vary depending on the hardware and the data being copied. Hard drive users can expect to see transfer rates ranging from 6 to 14 Mb/Min, averaging about 9 Mb/Min.

- DHANDL30:** Data Handler V3.0 - A memory resident GEM-based, menu-driven database program. It is designed as a very simple and easy to use system for handling data. Each screen has instructions on what can be done within that screen. Select "Load DB" from the "Files" menu and load in SAMPLE.DB. You can use this data to practice adding, updating, deleting, searching, and sorting records. You can see the results by going to the "Print" menu and choose "All to Screen". Within a few keystrokes, you'll find the system very easy to use.
- MAGBASE:** Magazine Base - A database for storing information about articles you have read in your favorite computer magazines. A number of magazines can then be stored together in a "binder". Powerful search facilities enable you to search for specific items in separate magazines, whole binders, or right from issue one!

DISK 288 - EDUCATIONAL DISK

- BODYSHOP:** Body Shop - A program to help kids of all ages learn human anatomy. It allows for interactive learning of the skeletal system and organs, using common or technical terms.
- KIDCOLR:** Kid Color - A learning game for 3-7 year olds. It is a simple program using the mouse to point at boxes that correspond to the color inside a box on the screen. There are sounds and special effects to keep the little ones interested.
- KV_GEO_1:** KV Geography V1.0 - Do you know the phases of the moon, the size of the planets, and the difference between a meteor and a meteoroid? Well, this program should help. Browse around by clicking on objects. Then take a quiz to see what you've learned. This is a hypertext geography program on the solar system.
- LET_HUNT:** Letter Hunt - This game will aid children in their recognition of the alphabet. The object of the game is to move the mouse to match the movable letter with the same letter on the board.
- TOONSMTH:** Toonsmith - A simple but addictive game.

The premise is that a record with a cute little tune on it has fallen to the floor and broken. You can still "play" the song, but it is now all jumbled up. Your job as the toonsmith is to put the 16 notes in proper order. This sounds simple, but it takes a good ear and attention to musical patterns.

DISK 289 - GAME DISK

- CRISSELE:** Location Crisslefridge - The most undemanding job in Location Crisslefridge, a solar system somewhere on the edge of the universe, was nuclear waste disposal. That was until the Cribblewerts invaded the system with the intention of dumping all their nuclear waste on one planet. You must dispose of the radiation cannisters as quickly as possible by pushing them into the jaws of carnivorous plants with huge chomping jaws. You must also clear all the radioactive earth, collect the anti-radiation crystals, diffuse the time-bomb, and kill any Cribblewerts. Sounds simple, right?
- FOREST:** Enchanted Forest - Players alternate turns to try to follow the path through the forest and move your marker off the board before your opponent. Along the way, you may be helped or hindered by Paths that allow movement in both directions and Magic Magnetic Discs which pull the player to them. There are also four Briar Patch Spots in which a player may be caught.
- GRANDPA:** Grampa Howard Mysteries, Adventure 1, A Journey In The Past - In this text adventure, you are transported 100 years back in time in an attempt to help Grampa Howard find and defeat Dr. Malvert. Everything is not as it seems however, due in part to the time displacement drag coefficient. Therefore, what seems to be obvious may not be that way at all. This is an excellent adventure for those wishing to get started in adventuring. Have you been turned off by adventures where you seem to get stuck right away? This adventure gives you multiple choices at each decision point, rather than just a prompt for you to type in something.
- OUTERLMT:** Outer Limits - Your mission in this game is to defend against the dreaded Dupliod invasion. You are the commander of Outpost 231 on the outer limit of the Federations territory. The Dupliods are the sworn enemy of the Federation. Your outpost stands in their way, and they are determined to destroy you and your outpost. This game is vaguely

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reminiscent of "Missile Command", in that you attempt to shoot down craft flying over a city which has a shield that is being closer to being destroyed with each hit. Very colorful and well-done.

DISK 290 - GAME DISK**CHEATS:**

Included on the disk are 2 files with cheats for about 100 commercial games. These include ways of getting infinite lives, going directly to higher levels, and getting extra missiles. This is usually done by pressing a certain key at some point, or typing in a codeword. Ever pay good money for a game, only to get stopped on the first screen? Here is a way to get your money's worth out of these games gathering dust on the shelf.

MCHES:

Mchess - It's you against the computer or against another human player in a game of chess. If you are feeling lazy, you can even have the computer play itself. The program plays a standard game of chess. All legal moves, such as promotion, en passant, and castling, are implemented. The default setting has you playing the white pieces, but this can be changed at any point in the game. Skill level is adjusted by limiting the amount of time in which a move is made. Various options include an "instant replay" option and having the computer suggest a move. Games in progress can be suspended, saved to disk and later reloaded, or even printed out.

MODEMFUN: Modem Fun - The program contains two games, BlackJack, and Modem Knights.

They are games that are played real-time between two people over the modem. Although this program was originally intended to be an on-line game for BBS systems, it may also be played with a friend without a BBS, by connecting two computers via modems and VT-52 emulators.

SPY:

The Spy Who Loved Me - This is a demo version of a commercial game based upon the James Bond movie of the same name. It features an overhead-view racing game featuring cars with weapons. It is fast-paced and very colorful.

The Game of Harmony

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inventive. They are also complex enough at higher levels to make me wonder if this game can be conquered in the regular playing mode. (It probably can, but my reflexes aren't what they used to be....)

I can't directly comment on ST-specific attributes of the game, since I haven't seen it. I have the IBM version of the game. The 320 x 200 16-color EGA mode (the same resolution as the ST) is quite nicely done. The IBM version includes a 256 color VGA version at 320 x 200 that is nothing short of spectacular.

The game supports a variety of sound boards and synthesizers in the IBM version, providing beautiful music and sound effects. Since they put so much care into the sound in the IBM version, I would hope that the ST version would show the same quality.

I found this game to be quite addictive.... you know, one of those "well, just one more game" types that can keep you up into the wee hours of the morning. If you are tired of the run-of-the-mill game, check this one out. You're sure to find it both refreshing and challenging.

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